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PRESS RELEASE

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MAINERS URGED TO SIGN UP FOR FREE DISPOSAL OF BANNED, UNUSABLE PESTICIDES

AUGUSTA—Hundreds of Maine citizens live unaware of a quiet crisis lurking in or near their homes. In barns, basements, sheds, or garages throughout the state reside tons of banned and unusable pesticides: old chemicals with infamous names like DDT, lead arsenate, 2,4,5-T, and chlordane.

Often, new owners of older homes or farms discover they have inherited hazardous waste. When they do, citizens face a dilemma: hire an expensive hazardous waste disposal service or dump the chemicals illegally, inviting harm to the environment and public health.

Fortunately, there's a third option that's both legal and responsible. Even better, it's free, simply by contacting the Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC). This fall, the state regulatory agency will dispose of banned pesticides or pesticides that have become caked, frozen, or otherwise rendered unusable. And, again, there is no cost to homeowners.

"We urge people holding these chemicals to contact us immediately to register," says Paul Schlein, BPC Public Information Officer. "There will be four sites throughout the state where folks will be able to bring their obsolete pesticides."

The collected chemicals go to out-of-state disposal facilities licensed by the US EPA where they are incinerated or reprocessed.

"While offering free obsolete pesticide disposal is expensive for us," notes Schlein, "it's a bargain, compared to the cost of cleaning up contaminated soil or water. However, it's worth noting that future funding is not guaranteed, so be sure to take advantage of this year's collection while you can."

Preregistration is required by September 25, 2009. To register, find out collection dates and locations, and learn important information about the temporary storage and transportation of obsolete pesticides, go to the BPC Web site at www.thinkfirstspraylast.org. Or, call the BPC at 287-2731.

The Maine Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) is the lead state agency for pesticide regulation. It is an administrative unit of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources with policy decisions made by a seven-member, public board. The BPC is creator of "YardScaping," a statewide program that recognizes the connection between backyards and watersheds, and calls for Maine citizens to make lawn care choices that don't compromise the environment or the beauty of their lawn.

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